

REMARKS

Claims 8, 10 and 12-16 are currently pending in this application. Claims 1-7, 9, 11 and 17 have been cancelled. Claims 8 and 16 have been amended. The support for the amended Claim 8 can be found in the canceled Claims 9 and 11, and the support for the amended Claim 16 can be found in the canceled Claim 17. No new matter has been introduced. Reconsideration of the pending claims in view of the arguments/comments below is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

In the Outstanding Office Action of October 18, 2005, Claims 8, 12 and 14-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,517,211 ('211 patent') in view of the U.S. Patent 6,762,751 ('751 patent') for the reasons set forth on pages 2-6 of the Office Action. Claim 10 stands rejected as being obvious over the '211 patent in view of the "'751 patent and further in view of Publication No.: US 2005/0001818A1 ('818 publication) for the reasons set forth on pages 6-7 of the Office Action. Claims 13 and 15 stand rejected as being obvious over the '211 patent in view of the '751 patent and further in view of the U.S. Patent 6,218,659 ('659 patent). Claims 1-7, 9, 11 and 17 have been canceled. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

When applying 35 U.S.C. § 103, the Examiner is required to adhere to the following tenets of patent law: (1) the claimed invention must be considered as a whole; (2) the references must be considered as a whole and must suggest the desirability and thus the obviousness of making the combination; (3) the references must be viewed without the benefit of impermissible hindsight vision afforded by the claimed invention; and (4) reasonable expectation of success is the standard with which obviousness is determined.

Hodosh v. Block Drug Co., Inc., 786 F.2d 1136, 1143 n.5, 229 USPQ 182, 187 n.5 (Fed. Cir. 1986).

Furthermore, to establish a prima facie case of obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. *In re Royka*, 490 F.2d 981, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA 1974). "All words in a claim must be considered in judging the patentability of that claim against the prior art." *In re Wilson*, 424 F.2d 1382, 1385, 165 USPQ 494, 496 (CCPA 1970).

Independent Claim 8, as amended, is directed to an optical cursor controller that includes a housing, an operating lens, a light source, a light processing unit, and a converging lens. The housing is formed with a lens-mounting hole therethrough. The operating lens is mounted in the lens-mounting hole, and has a convex operating surface that is accessible from an exterior of the housing and that **permits movement of an object** thereon. The light source is mounted in the housing, and radiates light that is directed to the operating lens reflected by the object on the operating surface and that contains an image of the object. The light processing unit is mounted in the housing, receives the reflected light, monitors the image of the object contained in the reflected light to detect movement of the object on the operating surface, and generates cursor control signals in accordance with the detected movement of the object.

Claim 16 is directed to an electronic apparatus comprising a display module with a display screen, a host module connected to the display module and provided with a keyboard thereon, and an optical cursor controller mounted on said host module, and operably associated with said display module for generating cursor control signals that control position of a cursor on said display screen of said display module.

In contrast, the '211 patent generally mentions an optical cursor controller that comprises a housing (1), a light source (2), a light processing unit (5), and a converging lens (3). The housing (1) is formed with a hole therethrough. The light source (2) is mounted in the housing (1), and radiates

light that is directed to the hole to thereby result in reflected light that is reflected by a workpad back into the housing via the hole. The light processing unit (5) is mounted in the housing (1), receives the reflected light via the converging lens (3) and a reflector assembly (4), monitors the image of the workpad contained in the reflected light to detect movement of the controller on the workpad, and generates cursor control signals in accordance with the detected movement of the controller.

Applicants would like to call the Examiner's attention to the fact that when the optical cursor controller of the '211 patent is turned over and operated, the controller responds by moving a cursor in a reverse direction from the direction of physical movement of an object relative to the light through the hole in the housing. Moreover, as the Examiner admitted in the Office Action (page 3, second paragraph), the '211 patent does not mention the limitation, "that permits movement of an object thereon" for the operating lens of the claimed invention. This indicates that the '211 patent teaches away from operating the optical cursor controller in an overturned manner. Further, the optical cursor controller of the '211 patent and the optical cursor controller of Claims 8 and 16 of the present application are analogous to a mouse and a trackball, respectively. The existence of both mice and trackballs is indicative of the fact that a trackball can perform certain tasks which a mouse cannot, and vice versa.

The '751 patent does not cure the deficiency of the '211 patent. The '751 patent generally mentions a pointing device that comprises a body with a cavity, an optical sensing system in the cavity and having a focusing lens, and a light-transmitting panel attached to the body and spanning the cavity. In use, an optical signal emitted by the sensing system is directed to the panel by the lens and is reflected by an object. For example, a user's finger, back into the cavity, is directed toward the sensing system by the lens and is picked up by the sensing system. The system, then, detects movement of the finger from the reflected optical signal. Nonetheless, the '751 patent neither mentions nor suggests an operating lens that has a convex operating surface. In fact, as illustrated in Figure 1 of the '751 patent, the operating lens has a flat operating surface.

In contrast, pages 4 and 5 of the present specification specifically state that the convex operating surface (21) of the operating lens (2) of the claimed optical cursor controller permits the operating lens (2) to create a magnifying effect, which provides a feature, as disclosed on pages 7 and 8 of the present specification. Applicants respectfully submit that the optical cursor controller of the present Claims 8 and 16 has been shown to be patentably distinct from the '211 and '751 patents.

The '818 publication generally mentions a convex lens (31) for converging reflected light from a surface (5) prior to receipt by a detecting device (21). The convex lens (31) of the '818 publication can hardly be considered to be equivalent to the operating lens (2) of the claimed invention since the former is disposed in the housing (1) and does not have an operating surface accessible from an exterior of the housing (1) to permit movement of an object thereon.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit the '211 patent, '751 patent and '808 publication, individually or in combination, do not render independent Claims 8 and 16 obvious.

Applicants further submit that Claims 10 and 12-15 are patentable because they depend from Claim 8 and define additional patentable subject matter.

Therefore, the '211 patent, '751 patent and '808 publication do not support a *prima facie* case of obviousness. The grounds for this rejection have been obviated and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 103 rejection is respectfully requested.

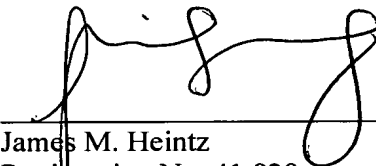
CONCLUSION

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Ping Wang, M.D. (Reg. No. 48,328) at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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FULL TEXT OF CASES (USPQ FIRST SERIES)

**In re ROYKA AND MARTIN, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA
1974)**

In re ROYKA AND MARTIN

(CCPA)

180 USPQ 580

Decided Feb. 7, 1974

No. 9092

U.S. Court of Customs and Patent Appeals

Headnotes

PATENTS

1. Patentability — Anticipation — Combining references (§ 51.205)

To support anticipation rejection, all elements of claim must be found in reference.

2. Construction of specification and claims — Broad or narrow — In general (§ 22.101)

Construction of specification and claims — By specification and drawings — In general (§ 22.251)

Claims are not read in a vacuum; while they are given broadest reasonable interpretation during prosecution, their terms still must be given meaning called for by specification of which they form a part.

3. Patentability — Anticipation — In general (§ 51.201)

Anticipation requires a finding that claimed invention be disclosed; it is not enough to say that applicants' invention and the reference are both usable for instruction and both consist of permanent and removable printings on paper.

4. Patentability — Subject matter for patent monopoly — Printed matter

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(§ 51.611)

It is not a valid reason for rejection that claim is merely a printed matter variation of design of reference; printed matter may very well constitute structural limitations upon which patentability can be predicated.

Particular patents—Answer System

Royka and Martin, Responsive Answer System, claims 28 and 30 to 36 of application allowed.

Case History and Disposition:**Appeal from Board of Appeals of the Patent Office.**

Application for patent of Stephen F. Royka and Robert G. Martin, Serial No. 648,701, filed June 26, 1967; Patent Office Group 336. From decision rejecting claims 28 and 30 to 36, applicants appeal. Reversed.

Attorneys:

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JOSEPH F. NAKAMURA (FRED W. SHERLING of counsel) for Commissioner of Patents.

Judge:

Before MARKEY, Chief Judge, and RICH, BALDWIN, LANE, and MILLER, Associate Judges.

Opinion Text**Opinion By:**

RICH, Judge.

This appeal is from the decision of the Patent Office Board of Appeals affirming the examiner's rejection of claims 28 and 30-36 of application serial No. 648,701, filed June 26, 1967, entitled "Responsive Answer System." We reverse.

The Invention

The appealed claims are directed to a device in the nature of an answer sheet for use in self-instruction and testing. The answer sheet may be associated with questions or separate therefrom. The essential features of the invention are that there are printed on the answer sheet in "response areas" meaningful information in permanent printing and

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confusing information in printing which can be removed, as by an eraser, both being legible so that a student, seeing a choice of answers to a question, must make a selection. Having made a selection, he then applies an eraser to the selected response area and some of the information will be readily removed. What remains advises him of the correctness or otherwise of his answer. The following figures from the drawings are illustrative: *Tabular, graphic, or textual material set at this point is not available. Please consult hard copy or call BNA PLUS at 1-800-452-7773 or 202-452-4323.*

Tabular, graphic, or textual material set at this point is not available. Please consult hard copy or call BNA PLUS at 1-800-452-7773 or 202-452-4323.

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Fig. 1A shows two response areas to a given question before any removing action by the student has taken place and Fig. 1B shows the permanent information remaining in each after erasure of the removable information. Of course, if the student makes an initial choice of area A, showing up "YES" or some other indication of a correct answer, he will not need to proceed further and erase the B area. In a modified form of the invention, a wrong selection, plus erasure, may expose, instead of or in addition to a statement that the answer is wrong, a number or other reference to further material which is to be studied.

A preferred method of printing the permanent meaningful information and the removable confusing information is by that type of xerography in which a fusible toner is used, the permanence of the printing depending on the extent to which the toner image is "fixed" or fused by heat. By successive printings of the two kinds of information with fixing to different degrees, one image can be made permanent and the other made subject to easy removal, both images retaining such similarity of appearance that the user of the answer sheet cannot tell them apart.

Claim 28 is the principal claim, all others being dependent thereon, and reads as follows:

28. A device for selectively indicating information comprising
a support having response areas for presenting information for selection,
permanent printing indicative of meaningful information permanently
fixed to said support within a response area, and
removable printing indicative of confusing information removably fixed to
said support within a response area,
said meaningful and confusing information being substantially legible
even when said permanent and removable printing are fixed over one another on
said support,
said permanent and removable printing being substantially similar such
that an observer cannot determine which information is permanent and which is
removable
whereby the information within a response area is selected by attempting
to remove the printing therein with the failure to remove printing identifying
meaningful information.

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Claims 30-36 add limitations which need not be considered except for noting that claims 33 and 34 alone specify the use of a xerographic toner, for which reason they were rejected on a different ground from the other claims.

The Rejection

The following references were relied on:

Reid et al. (Reid) 356,695 Jan. 25, 1887

Bernstein et al. (Bernstein) 3,055,117 Sep. 25, 1962

Lein et al. (Lein) 3,364,857 Jan. 23, 1968 (filed Feb. 2, 1966)

Claims 28, 30, 31, and 32 were rejected as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. 102 by Bernstein; claims 28, 31, 32, 35, and 36 were rejected as anticipated under § 102 by Reid; and claims 33 and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 for obviousness, on either Bernstein or Reid in view of Lein. These were the examiner's rejections and the board affirmed them, adhering to its decision on reconsideration.

Bernstein discloses an answer sheet in which printed information representing a response is "temporarily concealed from the observer" and he discloses a number of different ways of effectively concealing the response. His specification states:

The objects of the invention are accomplished by utilizing the hiding media to confuse the participant and to render the response and the hiding media indistinguishable and thus conceal the presence, absence, nature or position of the response from the participant. This may be effectuated by careful attention being paid to a number of factors including the design, color and position of the hiding or confusing media.

Fig. 1 of Bernstein's drawings illustrates some of his concealing means:

Tabular, graphic, or textual material set at this point is not available. Please consult hard copy or call BNA PLUS at 1-800-452-7773 or 202-452-4323.

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The following is the written description:

Referring now to the drawing, FIG. 1 illustrates some of the many optically confusing patterns which may be positioned between the printed structure to be concealed and the point of observation. Column 11 shows the information which is to be concealed. This information is repeated in columns 12 through 16 but in each case is concealed by a pattern in accordance with the present invention. Column 12 utilizes a pattern comprising an alphabetical maze in both line and half tone screen. Column 13 utilizes a pattern comprising an absorbing field having a plurality of irregular dot-like interstices. Column 14 utilizes a pattern comprising a maze of plus signs combined with dots. Columns 15 and 16 illustrate irregular and non-repetitious patterns.

Bernstein says that if at least 50% of the response is actually covered by the opaque portions of the confusion pattern, complete concealment is obtained. He also says that added means of concealment may be used, such as scoring and embossing and perforating the paper in order to scatter the light or let it shine through.

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Reid is entitled "Transformation Picture and Print." The invention is said to be useful for advertisements, Christmas cards, birthday cards, valentines, and the like and as a source of amusement and instruction for children. It consists of a picture or print, part of which is permanently printed and part of which is removable from the paper on which it is printed. For the latter various soluble undercoatings or inks are described. If the picture is washed with a solvent, which may be water, the removable part disappears and the pictorial and/or typographic matter changes. The invention is illustrated by a typical nineteenth century temperance propaganda piece depicting the evils of drink. In the finished picture there are three scenes from left to right: Scene 1, the innocent child leads her father home from the pub; Scene 2, Father sits slumped in the kitchen chair with his bottle beside him, the family wash hanging above his head, this picture being entitled "The Effects of Drink"; Scene 3, Mother stands in front of a sign reading "Pawn Shop." Across the bottom of the picture is a legend which says "Wash the above and see what water will do." Fig. II shows the result of washing with water: Scene 1, a handsome young man and his happy daughter stroll on the street; Scene 2, Father sits erect in a well-appointed room at a cloth-covered table, apparently having a cup of tea, obviously a gentleman; Scene 3, Mother beams from the sideline and the Pawn Shop sign has vanished. Two new subscriptions appear and the words "The" and "Drink" have disappeared, the resultant being a new picture title reading "The Beneficial Effects of Temperance." "The Beneficial" and "Temperance" were covered by some soluble opaque in the original picture. No doubt the overall effect is instruction. Perhaps there was amusement in bringing about the transformation.

Lein relates to xerography and is relied on only for its disclosure of the removability of partially fused toner and the permanence of fully fused toner.

Opinion

[1] As to the § 102 anticipation rejections, it will suffice to consider independent claim 28. If it is not fully met by Reid or Bernstein, neither are the more limited dependent claims. It is elementary that to support an anticipation rejection, all elements of the claim must be found in the reference. We do not find claim 28 anticipated by Bernstein because, as we read the claim, it requires the display of *legible* meaningful and *legible* confusing *information* simultaneously, between which the user of the device may make a selection before he undertakes to remove any of the information from the response area selected by him. The element we find most clearly missing, contrary to the reasoning of the examiner and the board, is the legible confusing *information*. The Patent Office proposes to read this limitation on Bernstein's confusion patterns which are nothing but meaningless obscuring screens, conveying no information and providing the user with no basis for making a *selection*, as called for by claim 28. In appellants' device the legible confusing information—i.e., the wrong answers—are legible in the sense that they can be read as intelligible words, not merely a jumble of type serving to obscure the words of the wrong answers.

Appellants were fully aware of Bernstein and discussed its disclosures in their specification, distinguishing from this and other prior art, saying, in part:

The inventive concept hereof confuses not by physical blocking as taught by the prior art, but by compounding, associating (including disarranging) permanent information with confusing information, usually at least some of which is similar

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in character to the permanent information as to render it impossible to tell which is permanent and which is removable confusing information. In the invention, generally no attempt is made to designedly physically cover the permanent information, but to confuse it beyond interpretation by the presentation of extraneous, removable, confusing information.

[2] Claims are not to be read in a vacuum and while it is true they are to be given the broadest *reasonable* interpretation during

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prosecution, their terms still have to be given the meaning called for by the specification of which they form a part. We cannot read the terms "legible" and "information" on Bernstein's confusion patterns, as did the examiner and the board. They are not "legible," as appellants use the term, and they convey no information.

As to anticipation by Reid, we find neither appellants' basic concept nor the substance of claim 28 to be disclosed. Apparently the solicitor could find little to support the rejection in Reid for all he says in his brief—so far as claim 28 is concerned—is:

Reid discloses a sheet which may be used for instruction and which may have a removable design partly covering a fixed design * * *. Therefore, the disclosure of the reference encompasses the arrangement wherein a removable design covers a fixed design with both designs being substantially legible.

[3] But claim 28 does not call for an arrangement wherein a removable design covers a fixed design. It calls for response areas, which Reid does not have, containing meaningful information in permanent printing together with removable printing conveying confusing information, both legible at the same time, between which a "selection" can be made. The only choice offered to the user by Reid is to follow the instruction to wash the whole visible picture with water or other solvent, thus removing the overprinting, to discover what the permanent picture is. The Patent Office attempt to read claim 28 on this reference is a tour de force. We hold that Reid does not anticipate for failure to meet the limitations of claim 28 to "response areas," to the presentation of two categories of information (meaningful-permanent and removable-confusing) within such areas, and the possibility of selection. Anticipation requires a finding that the claimed invention be disclosed. It is not enough to say that appellants' invention and the reference are both usable for instruction and both consist of permanent and removable printings on paper, as did the solicitor.

The dependent claims rejected with claim 28, as anticipated under § 102, are not anticipated since claim 28 is not anticipated. Some of them merely add features which are disclosed by the references and some do not. Insofar as they do not, they further negative anticipation. The examiner recognized this fact as to claims 33 and 34, which are limited to xerography, and therefore did not reject them under § 102. Similarly, he did not reject claim 30 on Reid or claims 35 and 36 on Bernstein. We find that claims 35 and 36 contain limitations which additionally distinguish from Reid. We have already noted that Reid has no "response areas" as required by claim 28 and so Reid does not disclose the structure of claim 35 which additionally requires both the correct and incorrect answers to appear within the same response area.

[4] As to claim 36, the examiner said it "is merely a printed matter variation of the design of the reference," Reid. This is not a valid reason for rejection. Printed matter may very well constitute structural limitations upon which patentability can be predicated. We have commented on this matter in *In re Jones*, 54 CCPA 1218, 373 F.2d 1007, 153 USPQ 77 (1967); and *In re Miller*, 57 CCPA 809, 418 F.2d 1392, 164 USPQ 46 (1969), and will not repeat ourselves. The limitations of claim 36 are not remotely suggested by Reid.

There remains the § 103 rejection of claims 33 and 34. Do they, taken together with all of the limitations of claim 28 from which they depend, define obvious subject matter? The difference between claim 28 and these two dependent claims is that they add the limitations to xerography. If Bernstein and Reid showed the claimed invention except for xerography, the addition of the Lein reference would make the subject matter of the claims obvious. But that is not the situation here. Adding the knowledge of xerographic technology to Bernstein or Reid still does not make the invention of claims 33 and 34 obvious for the same reasons we have given above in discussing anticipation. The essence of appellants' invention, as set forth in claim 28, is still missing notwithstanding the addition of the Lein reference and we see nothing in the combinations of references which would have made the invention obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time it was made. We will, therefore, reverse this rejection.

The decision of the board is *reversed*.

- End of Case -

FULL TEXT OF CASES (USPQ FIRST SERIES)

Hodosh v. Block Drug Co., Inc., 229 USPQ 182 (CA FC 1986)

Hodosh v. Block Drug Co., Inc.

(CA FC)

229 USPQ 182

Decided March 24, 1986

No. 85-2607

U.S. Court of Appeals Federal Circuit

Headnotes

PATENTS

1. Patentability -- Invention -- Specific cases -- Chemical (§ 51.5093)

Summary judgment holding that claimed tooth desensitizer was invalid for obviousness was improper, in view of existing questions of material fact concerning various terms used in Chinese and European references.

2. Patentability -- Invention -- In general (§ 51.501)

Secondary considerations and additional evidence likely to be considered at trial must be considered in obviousness determination.

Particular patents -- Dental Treatments

3,863,006, Hodosh, Method for Desensitizing Teeth, holding of invalidity reversed.

Case History and Disposition:

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Appeal from District Court for the District of New Jersey, Sarokin, J.; 226 USPQ 645 .

Action by Milton Hodosh, and Richardson-Vicks, Inc., against Block Drug Company, Inc., and Dentco, Inc., for patent infringement. From summary judgment for defendants, plaintiffs appeal. Reversed and remanded.

Attorneys:

John O. Tramontine, and Fish & Neave, and Hugh A. Chapin, and Kenyon & Kenyon, all of New York, N.Y. (W. Edward Bailey, Norman H. Beamer, Fish & Neave, Paul Lempel, William J. McNichol, and Kenyon & Kenyon, all of New York, N.Y., on the brief) for appellants.

Jerome G. Lee, and Morgan, Finnegan, Pine, Foley & Lee, both of New York, N.Y. (William S. Feiler, Maria C.H. Lin, Morgan, Finnegan, Pine, Foley & Lee, Marvin C. Soffen, Edward A. Meilman, and Ostrolenk, Faber, Gerb & Soffen, all of New York, N.Y., on the brief) for appellees.

Judge:

Before Rich, Davis, and Baldwin, Circuit Judges.

Opinion Text

Opinion By:

Rich, Circuit Judge.

This appeal is from the July 12, 1985, judgment of the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey, 226 USPQ 645 , granting summary judgment to Block Drug Company, Inc., et al. (Block) and holding that all six claims of patent No. 3,863,006 for "Method of Desensitizing Teeth" ('006 patent), issued to Dr. Milton Hodosh and licensed to Richardson-Vicks, Inc. (collectively, Hodosh), are invalid for obviousness under 35 USC 103. We reverse remand.

Background

Tooth desensitizers reduce discomfort and pain caused by tooth hypersensitivity or exposed dentin, the portion of the tooth between the enamel and the pulp which includes a myriad of microscopic tubules. Persons suffering from this condition react painfully to hot or cold foods, citric acid or sweets, or everyday chemical, thermal, or tactile stimuli including toothbrush contact.

Milton Hodosh, a practicing dentist for about thirty years, independently developed the claimed subject matter of the '006 patent and granted Richardson-Vicks an exclusive license to make, use, and sell the claimed invention; the latter markets its tooth desensitizing toothpaste under the trademark "Denquel."

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Claim 1 of the '006 patent¹ reads:

The method of desensitizing hypersensitive dentin and cementum by applying thereto an agent the essential ingredient of which is a nitrate of one of the following alkali metals: potassium, lithium or sodium said nitrate comprising between 1 percent and 20 percent by weight of said agent.

The remaining claims appear in the opinion below.

Appellee Block has, since 1961, marketed a tooth desensitizing toothpaste, covered by its patent No. 2,122,483 (the Rosenthal patent) for "Strontium Ion Toothpaste" issued in 1964, under the trademark "Sensodyne." The Rosenthal patent and the '006 patent disclose toothpaste formulae which are the same except that the latter contains, as a desensitizing agent, potassium nitrate instead of the Rosenthal-Block strontium chloride. After requesting and being denied a license under the '006 patent, Block developed its own potassium nitrate-containing tooth-desensitizing toothpaste called "Promise" and "Sensodyne-F."²

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March 30, 1983, Hodosh sued Block alleging that the sale of "Promise" and "Sensodyne-F" contributorily infringed and actively induced infringement of the '006 patent. Block answered and counterclaimed alleging patent misuse and consequent unenforceability of the '006 patent. On July 11, 1984, Block moved for summary judgment as to both misuse and patent invalidity. Oral argument was heard October 16, 1984, and decision was reserved. June 14, 1985, the reported decision was handed down granting the motion as to patent invalidity and dismissing the motion on misuse as moot, resulting in the judgment now on appeal.

The district court heard no expert testimony, but did hear arguments of counsel, receive briefs, review exhibits, and had before it declarations and affidavits from experts on both sides commenting on the eight prior art references involved here, including the Rosenthal patent. The court determined that there were no genuine issues of material fact and concluded as a matter of law that the claims of the '006 patent were invalid under §103 because the Rosenthal patent disclosed each element claimed in the '006 patent except the potassium nitrate, which, in its view, was disclosed in two Chinese references, both based on ancient Chinese writings. The court also stated that six European references supported its conclusion of obviousness.

Because the appropriateness of summary judgment is determined on an analysis of the facts, *First National Bank of Arizona v. Cities Service Co.*, 391 U.S. 253 (1968), and because everything about these references, as a whole, *see, e.g., Interconnect Planning Corp. v. Feil*, 774 F.2d 1132, 1138, 227 USPQ 543, 547-48 (Fed. Cir. 1985), is important to our determination, we review the record and lay out the relevant portions of the references in some detail.

A. The Chinese References

1. The Grand Dictionary of Chinese Medicine and Drugs (The Grand Dictionary)

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based on ancient Chinese compilations assembled roughly 500 years ago from works of physicians going back 4000-5000 years. Only a portion of the 1963 Chinese text was before the court and is before us on appeal. For purposes of this litigation, that portion was translated into English by Block's translator, Roger Wei-Ming Tsao (Mr. Cao). Mr. Cao is a doctor of Chinese medicine and a bilingual tutor. Block's other expert, Dr. Stephen Wei, a professor of dentistry fluent in Chinese, concurred in that translation. The writings from which the *Grand Dictionary* was compiled are not in evidence nor are any earlier writings.

In a nutshell, the district court relied upon the *Grand Dictionary* because of its discussion of "xiao shi" to which the *Grand Dictionary* associates the name "niter" and the chemical composition KNO_3 and the ability to cure, inter alia, tooth pain. The court's opinion was that this reference teaches the use of xiao shi, which is the same as niter and is therefore the same as potassium nitrate, to cure tooth pain; thus, the teachings of the Rosenthal patent and the *Grand Dictionary* show that the '006 invention would have been obvious.

The following discussion and quotations are part of an attempt to convey the nature of the *Grand Dictionary*. The translated portion of the *Grand Dictionary* is entitled "Niter." The text under the first subheading "Nomenclature" reads: "It was so named because it has the power to consume various stones." Under "Other Names Stated in Classical Medical Books," the text reads "Mang Xiao (Bie-Lu), Bitter Xiao (Zhen-Quan), Flaming Xiao (Tu-Su) . . . and Xiao-Shi . . ." Thereafter, following "Foreign Names," the *Grand Dictionary* reads: "Salpetrae, Salnitri (in Latin); Niter (in English); and Salpoter (in German)." One page later, " KNO_3 " is listed under "Chemical Composition."

The portion upon which Block and the district court rely to show that this substance cures tooth pain is headed "Collective Statements" and reads:

(Ming): Li-Shi-Zhen said: It cures summer infections and the catching of colds. It cures acute enteritis with severe vomiting, exertion through excessive sexual activity, black jaundice, chronic abdominal pain, conjunctivitis, headaches and tooth pain.

The next three or so pages of the *Grand Dictionary* list the ailments that this substance cures. An interesting but not atypical paragraph reads: "For curing the paralysis of the four limbs, leprosy or problems caused by Taoist stone eating." This substance also apparently cures indigestion, lack of energy, typhoid, cataracts, and much, much more. The *Grand Dictionary* compares what appears to

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be various forms in which xiao shi is found, and the characteristics of each. An excerpt is:

Pu-Xiao (Na_2SO_4) has the nature of water, tastes salty, and its flavor is cold. It can only descend and cannot ascend. It is Yin within Yin -- that's why it can cleanse the accumulation in the gastrointestinal tract and can expel the San-Jiao devilish fire. Whereas Niter (KNO_3) has the nature of fire, tastes bitter and spicy, tastes slightly salty and has a flavor which is very warm, it's [sic] nature is ascending. It is fire within water. That's why it can break the accumulation and

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disperse hardness, and cure the febrile diseases.

2. *Ben Cao Gang Mu*

Ben Cao Gang Mu (Ben Cao) is a treatise on Chinese Medicine published in Hong Kong, in Chinese, in 1930, 1954, and 1965, but was originally written by Li-Shi-Zhen who lived during the Ming Dynasty.³ Like the *Grand Dictionary*, only a portion of the Chinese text *Ben Cao* is in evidence and that portion was translated by Mr. Cao and Dr. Wei for purposes of this litigation. The district court relied upon *Ben Cao* because it discusses "xiao shi," which the translation of *Ben Cao* states is "niter" and associates the ability to cure "tooth pain (Ya Tong or Ya Teng)."

It is important to note, and the district court appeared to accept as fact, that the portion of the *Grand Dictionary* relied upon was compiled during the Ming Dynasty of the 13th to 15th centuries in *Ben Cao Gang Mu* so that the relevant portion of the *Grand Dictionary* is substantially a restatement of *Ben Cao* with some modification by an unidentified author. The court stated that these two references "quote the same Ming Dynasty source as labeling KNO 3 for tooth pain."

The *Ben Cao* translation is entitled "Xiao-Shi (Niter)" and refers to the same "Other names" for this substance listed in the *Grand Dictionary*. With respect to the quoted sections above, the *Ben Cao* translation is nearly verbatim. It has this to say about tooth pain:

Da Ming states: It cures summer infections and the catching of colds, acute enteritis with severe vomiting, exertion thru excessive sexual activity and black jaundice, chronic abdominal pain, conjunctivitis, headache and tooth pain (Ya-Tong or Ya Teng).

Hodosh argues that summary judgment was inappropriate; issues of fact as to the meanings of xiao shi and ya tong remain because a skilled dental researcher would surely seek and obtain a complete translation of the *Grand Dictionary* and of the other ancient Chinese references and would read those references carefully. Hodosh also argues that the ancient references should be dismissed because a person skilled in the art would find them incredible and would regard them as a quagmire of medical and dental nonsense. It therefore takes issue with the court's holding quoted below which apparently precluded inquiry into the accuracy of the references by one skilled in the art:

[A]ttacks upon the translation leading up to the prior art reference embodied in the *Grand Dictionary of Chinese Medicine and Drugs*, . . . or upon Chinese medicine as a whole, . . . are not here regarded as particularly pertinent, since they require skill beyond the scope of the "experienced researcher in dental fields"

Hodosh relies heavily on its expert's, Dr. Shklar's, testimony about the Chinese references: "[T]hey represent in modern terms, materials that are rarely comprehensible and frequently contradictory in their literal terms. The materials are largely seen by contemporary medical scientists as absurd; no serious medical researcher would waste his or her time with them."⁴ Hodosh also contests this holding by the district court:

Nor, if it is true that KNO 3 alleviates tooth sensitivity, is such reference in the prior art rebutted by the existence of errors in the reference such as, for example, the claim that KNO 3 is a cure for "exertion through excessive sexual activity."

Whatever the merits of the other aspects of the Chinese references, the fact that

they reveal KNO₃ to be a cure for ya tong is what is dispositive here. The reference clearly discloses such function of potassium nitrate, albeit in the context of otherwise incredible, and even erroneous descriptions of the compound's quality.

With respect to the specific meaning of xiao shi as used in these references, both Dr. Shklar and Hodosh's other expert, Mr. Yen, a professional translator of Chinese and English lan

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guages, stated that the compiler of the *Grand Dictionary* erred in associating potassium nitrate or niter with xiao shi. Mr. Yen states that he

was not able to render one single precise version because various dictionaries contain different and even conflicting definitions. For example, *Source of Words*, a Chinese language dictionary, published by Commercial Press, Taiwan, which has editions dating back to 1915, defines "Xiao-Shi" as "Mang-Xiao" on page 1255, and under "Mang-Xiao" on page 1770, reference is made that "Mang-Xiao" is "Liu-Suen-Na," and on page 1523 "Liu-Suen-Na" is defined as sodium sulfate (Na₂SO₄·10H₂O).

Mr. Yen also stated that "Xiao-Shi could be more than one material and that more than one material may be represented by the term 'Xiao-Shi'."

Dr. Shklar concurred:

In my opinion, therefore, the answer to the question: What was "Xiao-Shi," is that it represented many different materials which cannot be identified with certainty.

Thus, these Exhibits did not describe potassium nitrate to one skilled in the art any more than any of the hundreds of salts, ores and oxides that possess some of the enumerated properties.

In addition, Dr. Shklar stated: "It is insufficient to simply state, as the Block translator does, that 'Xiao-Shi' is 'niter,' and then cite a modern dictionary to 'establish' that 'niter' is potassium nitrate." With respect to both the *Grand Dictionary* and *Ben Cao*, he stated that "the translator appears to have inserted the term 'niter' into the text where the phrase 'consumer of stones' actually belongs."

Block's arguments, on the other hand, in part based on the short affidavit by Mr. Wei, substantially follow the district court's opinion. Block also challenges the competence of Hodosh's experts stating that they "either had no knowledge or training in the Chinese language or Chinese medicine or were unfamiliar with dentistry or medicine generally." Block also emphasizes that the Chinese references correctly disclose many of potassium nitrate's characteristics, like burning with a violet flame, useability for making signal fires and gun powder, and its water solubility; these three properties of xiao shi in the Chinese references definitely confirm, according to Block, that xiao shi is potassium nitrate, KNO₃.

B. The European Prior Art

This art is contained in six references and was not relied upon to any significant degree by Block or the district court. Hodosh scarcely mentions it on appeal, instead

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preferring to show the existence of genuine issues of material fact with respect to the Chinese references. After concluding that using potassium nitrate to cure tooth pain would have been obvious from Rosenthal in view of the Chinese art, the court stated: "Such holding is strengthened by the European prior art which, while ambiguous because of the several conflicting definitions in the term 'niter,' at least suggest to one skilled in the art that potassium nitrate ought to be tried as a cure for tooth pain in general."

Block submitted no affidavits that addressed the substance of the European references. Hodosh's Dr. Shklar, on the other hand, stated why this art, part of the "humors, spirits and Alchemy of the Dark Ages" having whatever medicinal effect they did by virtue of their use of wine, opium, or other narcotic substances, would have been questioned by one skilled in the art. He specifically contends that Block's translation of "nitre" is erroneous: "it is common knowledge that these terms meant sodium carbonate and/or sodium carbonate-sodium bicarbonate mixture. . . ."

To afford a glimpse of the nature of these references, an interesting and typical excerpt, one quoted by the district court, based upon a statement by the long since deceased French surgeon Guy de Chauliac reads that "a mixture of 'cuttlebone, small white sea shells, pumice, burnt stag's horn, *nitre*, alum, rock salt, burnt roots of iris, aristolochia, and reeds' could create an effective dentifrice." (District court's emphasis.) Three of the European references are based on that statement. The district court noted the others:

Additionally, a 1693 treatise by the British Professor of Physics William Salmon states that nitrum "held in the Mouth . . . immediately helps the Toothach, if burnt and used in a Dentifrice, it cleanses and whitens the Teeth." . . . Similarly, a reference work by Hardianus a Mynsicht, translated into English in 1682, describes a mixture, including "nitre" as a "tincture for the toothache." . . . Finally, Pliny the Elder, in his *Historie of the World, The Second Tome*, translated into English in 1601, describes the use of nitre to "easeth the toothach, if the mouth and gums be washed therewith," or if burned, as a dentifrice. [Reference to Exhibits omitted.]

With this description of both the Chinese and European references, and of what they represent as a whole, in hand, we consider the proper application of the *Graham* standards and their effect upon the propriety of summary judgment in this case. See generally *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 17 [148 USPQ 459, 467] (1966); *Panduit Corp. v. Dennison*

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Manufacturing Co., 774 F.2d 1082, 227 USPQ 337 (Fed. Cir. 1985).

OPINION

A. Summary Judgment

Summary judgment, in patent as in other cases, is appropriate where there is no genuine issue of material fact, and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. See *Molinaro v. Fannon/Courier Corp.* 745 F.2d 651, 653-54, 223 USPQ 706, 707 (Fed. Cir. 1984). The movant bears the burden of demonstrating the absence of all genuine issues of material fact, and the district court must view the evidence in a light most

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favorable to the nonmoving party and draw all reasonable inferences in its favor. *See United States v. Diebold, Inc.*, 369 U.S. 654, 655 (1962); *Palumbo v. Don-Joy Co.*, 762 F.2d 969, 973, 226 USPQ 5, 7 (Fed. Cir. 1985). The party opposing summary judgment must show an evidentiary conflict on the record; mere denials or conclusory statements are not sufficient. *Barmag Barmer Maschinenfabrik AG v. Murata Machinery, Ltd.*, 731 F.2d 831, 836, 221 USPQ 561, 564 (Fed. Cir. 1984). Summary judgment is authorized where it is quite clear what the truth is. *Sartor v. Arkansas Natural Gas Corp.*, 321 U.S. 620, 627 (1944).

B. The Issues Below

The decision and opinion of the district court granting summary judgment dealt with two issues: the first was whether the '006 patent is invalid as anticipated under §102(b), the court holding it is not; and the second was whether the '006 patent is invalid for obviousness under §103, the court holding that it is. Hodosh of course appeals the summary judgment with respect to only the issue on which it lost -- obviousness and Block has not appealed. Because we are remanding for trial, however, we will comment briefly on anticipation to make it clear that we deem that question to have been conclusively disposed of in this case and because it is closely related to the obviousness issue.

1. Anticipation, §102(b)

We agree entirely with the district court's holding that the '006 patent is not invalid as anticipated because there is no issue of fact that none of the prior art references discloses every element of the claimed invention. This issue was, therefore, appropriately and properly disposed of by summary judgment.

We do not agree, however, with some of the district court's remarks about anticipation, in particular, that the unavailability of the Chinese references and whether one skilled in the art could locate them with "reasonable diligence" bears on whether those references anticipate the claimed subject matter. Whether a reference is available as prior art and whether it anticipates (i.e., contains every claimed element) are separate questions. Moreover, the district court's determination that the references are unavailable for §102 purposes seems to be inconsistent with the approach subsequently taken by the district court in determining obviousness. The court later used these same references to support its holding that the claimed subject matter would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to one of ordinary skill in the art.

2. Obviousness, §103

[1] Questions of material fact remain with respect to the meaning of various terms used in the Chinese and European references and we therefore hold that summary judgment on the ground of obviousness of the claimed invention was improper.

The district court's statement that ya tong means tooth hypersensitivity as well as tooth pain is the resolution of a head-on factual controversy. The court improperly drew the inference against Hodosh, the nonmoving party, that a statement about ya tong made to the German Patent Office by Dr. Hodosh's German patent agent was made with knowledge of the Chinese references. The statement in question occurred seven years after the '006 patent issued in connection with Dr. Hodosh's counterpart German application. The statement was: "The supersensitivity of dentine has been known for a long time and can be traced back 4000 years to the Chinese where it was known as 'Ya
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Tong'." Hodosh in this suit disclaims this statement urging that it was factual error.

There is no evidence that the above statement was based on the Chinese references or that Dr. Hodosh conveyed this information to the German patent agent. The important fact question as to the meaning of ya tong cannot be overcome simply by styling this statement an admission binding on Hodosh. Hodosh is entitled, as Block essentially concedes, to rebut the statement with evidence to the contrary. Hodosh will have that chance at trial.

Nor does the statement in the affidavit of Block's expert, Dr. Wei, that ya tong means tooth hypersensitivity eliminate the presence of the question of the meaning of ya tong. As the Supreme Court long ago observed, "Ex

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perience has shown that opposite opinions of persons professing to be experts, may be obtained to any amount. . . ." *Winans v. New York and Erie Railroad Co.*, 62 U.S. 88 (1859). The substance of Dr. Sklhar's affidavit on behalf of Hodosh goes far beyond merely denying that ya tong means tooth hypersensitivity and thus is more than adequate to show an evidentiary conflict on the record with respect to this crucial point, thus precluding summary judgment. *Cf. Union Carbide Corp. v. American Can Co.*, 724 F.2d 1567, 1571, 220 USPQ 584, 587-88 (Fed. Cir. 1984).

Furthermore, a genuine issue of material fact exists with respect to the meaning of the terms nitre, nitrum, and nitri as used in the European references. Dr. Sklhar's affidavit is more than adequate to withstand the challenge of this summary judgment motion. A reasonable inference that these terms are sodium, as opposed to potassium, compounds is permissible; Hodosh has shown an evidentiary conflict on the record. The European references, Dr. Sklhar explained in his affidavit, are based on the 77 A.D. writings of Pliny The Elder, who understood these terms to mean "sodium carbonate and/or a sodium carbonate-sodium bicarbonate mixture."

The obviousness determination here, given the existence of genuine material issues of fact with respect to the meanings of terms used in these references, is not suitably disposed of by summary judgment under the rules pertaining thereto. *See generally Palumbo*, supra, and *Lemelson v. TRW, Inc.*, 760 F.2d 1254, 1260-61, 225 USPQ 697, 700-01 (Fed. Cir. 1985). The fact issues herein must be resolved by trial in which the conflicting views of the experts will be subject to the refining fire of cross examination, a more effective means of arriving at the legal conclusion of obviousness vel non than perusal of ex parte affidavits and declarations of partisan experts lobbed at each other from opposing trenches.

We observe, for the benefit of the trial court, that we are totally unimpressed by Block's forensic device of comparing the Rosenthal prior art toothpaste formula and the Hodosh toothpaste example in parallel columns and then asserting, as though it were filled with significant meaning, that the "only difference is the use of potassium nitrate in place of strontium chloride," or that "the Hodosh patent merely substitutes potassium nitrate for strontium chloride." This device was pushed to the limit in oral argument by pointing out that the Hodosh toothpaste has the *same* formula, *except* for the active desensitizing ingredient, down to the last decimal point. This argument is meaningless

on the obviousness issue. "Sensodyne" and apparently other desensitizing toothpaste formulae being well known as commercial products, it is entirely clear that Dr. Hodosh's invention was the discovery of an apparently superior *desensitizing agent* and he never thought it was a toothpaste formula. He made that invention even if it should later be decided that it was known to the Chinese. It is apparent that Hodosh's patent solicitor merely adopted the prior art Rosenthal toothpaste base formula as a convenient example to illustrate the kind of a paste in which the Hodosh desensitizer might be used, which was within his right. The similarities -- indeed, identity -- of the paste bases is irrelevant in considering the issue of the unobviousness of the desensitizer. The Rosenthal patent, cited as prior art by Hodosh in his patent specification, was the jumping-off place for the description of his discovery. Hodosh does not claim to have been the first inventor of a desensitizing toothpaste; he claims to have improved it. The issue for trial is whether his improvement would have been obvious.⁵

C. Secondary Considerations

The district court refused on the motion for summary judgment to consider the evidence of secondary considerations. After acknowledging its existence and the arguments based on it, it stated:

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However, the court continues to find that the Hodosh patent is invalid on grounds of obviousness; these secondary considerations stem not from the novelty or inventiveness engendered by substituting potassium nitrate in an already existing formula, but from a lack of knowledge on the part of those in the field of the references here cited. That lack is here overcome by the presumption of omniscience discussed, *supra*, a rule of law by which the court is bound, whatever its merits.

[2] That secondary considerations are not considered unless there is evidence that those in the industry knew of the prior art is a non sequitur. Evidence of secondary considerations is considered independently of what any real person *knows* about the prior art. These considerations are *objective* criteria of obviousness that help illuminate the subjective determination involved in the hypothesis used to draw the legal conclusion of obviousness based upon the first three factual inquiries delineated in *Graham*. Thus, to require that actual inventors in the field have the omniscience of the hypothetical person in the art is not only contrary to case law, *see Kimberly-Clark v. Johnson & Johnson*, 745 F.2d 1437, 223 USPQ 603 (Fed. Cir. 1984), but eliminates a useful tool for trial judges faced with a nonobviousness determination.

The secondary consideration evidence of record and the additional evidence likely to be submitted at trial must be considered in the obviousness determination. *See generally Fromson v. Advance Offset Plate, Inc.*, 755 F.2d 1549, 1557, 225 USPQ 26, 32 (Fed. Cir. 1985).

Conclusion

The grant of summary judgment of invalidity is *reversed* and the case is *remanded* for trial in accordance with this opinion.

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*REVERSED AND REMANDED***Footnotes**

Footnote 1. A certificate of reexamination confirming the patentability of claims 1-6 of the '006 patent was issued June 21, 1983, as a result of Hodosh's request for reexamination in 1982. Only one of the prior art references involved here, the Rosenthal patent, *infra*, was considered in the reexamination.

Footnote 2. Block also initiated regulatory proceedings designed to delay or prevent Richardson-Vicks' marketing of "Denquel." Block, having allegedly failed to comply with Food and Drug Administration (FDA) procedures before marketing "Promise" and "Sensodyne-F" in competitive response to Richardson-Vicks' introduction of "Denquel," is currently defending itself in forfeiture proceedings initiated by the FDA.

Footnote 3. The Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD) was marked by the restoration of traditional institutions in China and the development of the arts, especially in porcelain, textiles, and painting.

Footnote 4. Dr. Shklar is the Charles A. Brackett Professor of Oral Pathology at the Harvard School of Dental Medicine, and is an acclaimed expert in dentistry. He is also an expert on the history of dentistry and holds membership in the American Academy of the History of Dentistry.

Footnote 5. Our comments on the district court's obviousness determination generally include the following tenets of patent law that must be adhered to when applying §103: (1) the claimed invention must be considered as a whole (35 USC 103; *see, e.g., Jones v. Hardy*, 727 F.2d 1524, 1529, 220 USPQ 1021, 1024 (Fed. Cir. 1984) (though the difference between claimed invention and prior art may seem slight, it may also have been the key to advancement of the art)); (2) the references must be considered as a whole and suggest the desirability and thus the obviousness of making the combination (*see, e.g., Lindemann Maschinenfabrik GmbH v. American Hoist and Derrick Co.*, 730 F.2d 1452, 1462, 221 USPQ 481, 488 (Fed. Cir. 1984); (3) the references must be viewed without the benefit of hindsight vision afforded by the claimed invention (*e.g., W.L. Gore & Associates, Inc. v. Garlock, Inc.*, 721 F.2d 1540, 1553, 220 USPQ 303, 313 (Fed. Cir. 1983)); (4) "ought to be tried" is not the standard with which obviousness is determined (*Jones, supra*, 727 F.2d at 1530, 220 USPQ at 1026); and (5) the presumption of validity remains constant and intact throughout litigation (35 USC 285; *e.g., American Hoist & Derrick Co. v. Sowa & Sons, Inc.*, 725 F.2d 1350, 1359-60, 220 USPQ 763, 770 (Fed. Cir. 1984)).

- End of Case -

FULL TEXT OF CASES (USPQ FIRST SERIES)

In re Wilson, 165 USPQ 494 (CCPA 1970)

In re Wilson

(CCPA)

165 USPQ 494

Decided May 7, 1970

No. 8271

U.S. Court of Customs and Patent Appeals

Headnotes

PATENTS

1. Claims - Indefinite - In general (§ 20.551)

Construction of specification and claims - In general (§ 22.01)

All words in claim must be considered in judging patentability of claim against prior art; if no reasonably definite meaning can be ascribed to terms in claim, subject matter does not become obvious - the claim becomes indefinite.

Particular patents-Brush

Wilson, Treated Brush and Brush Treating Composition, claims 1 to 4, 8 to 10, and 15 to 21 of application allowed.

Case History and Disposition:

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Appeal from Board of Appeals of the Patent Office.

Application for patent of David W. Wilson, Serial No. 332,321, filed Nov. 5, 1963; Patent Office Group 146. From decision rejecting claims 1

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to 4, 8 to 10, and 15 to 21, applicant appeals. **Reversed.**

Attorneys:

Oberlin, Maky, Donnelly & Renner, William E. Thomson, Jr., and John C. Oberlin, all of Cleveland, Ohio, for appellant.

Joseph Schimmel (Raymond E. Martin of counsel) for Commissioner of Patents.

Judge:

Before Rich, Acting Chief Judge, Almond, Baldwin, and Lane, Associate Judges, and Ford, Judge, United States Customs Court, sitting by designation.

Opinion Text

Opinion By:

Lane, Judge.

This appeal is from the decision of the Patent Office Board of Appeals, which affirmed the rejection of claims 1-4, 8-10, and 15-21 in appellant's application serial No. 332,321, filed November 5, 1963, for "Treated Brush and Brush Treating Composition." Four other claims have been allowed. We conclude that the board's decision must be reversed.

The Disclosure

Appellant's disclosure discusses certain problems in the treatment of power-driven rotary brushes. According to the disclosure, it was desirable to produce a composition for treating the brush bristles, whereby the ability of the bristles to hold abrasive particles would be enhanced. It discloses that the treatment composition should have a strength of adhesion to the brush bristles sufficiently great to prevent such composition from transferring excessively to the object being brushed; that the treatment material should wear at substantially the same rate as the brush bristles; that the material should have a high temperature softening point; and that the strength of adhesion between the treating composition and the abrasive particles must be sufficient to withstand the centrifugal force which normally would tend to throw the abrasive outwardly from the brush. The disclosure states that previously known brush-treating compositions did not accomplish all these objectives and had a tendency to dry and lose their tackiness over a period of time, thus becoming useless for holding abrasive particles on the bristles.

The disclosure states that appellant discovered that a composition having a high temperature softening point and a high degree of tackiness could be produced if a film-forming resin were blended with a tackifier resin which was incompatible with (insoluble in) the film-forming resin. The resulting composition would have two distinct phases: a continuous phase comprised of film-forming resin, either alone or saturated with a small quantity of tackifier resin, and a dispersed phase comprised of small particles of tackifier resin. The two resins may be either completely or partially incompatible, and the disclosure states that the more insoluble the resins, the greater the tack which the

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composition possesses. Appellant also disclosed that certain plasticizers could be added to render the resins more incompatible, thus further increasing the tack of the composition. Finally, appellant stated that the entire composition could be dissolved in a volatile solvent to allow easy application to the brush, the solvent being one which quickly evaporates upon such application.

The specification contains a list of suitable film-forming resins, including ethyl cellulose, nitro cellulose, cellulose acetate, polyvinyl acetate and cis-polyisoprene, among other materials. A list of tackifiers is given, including certain esters of abietic acid, polyvinyl ethyl ether, coumarone indene resin and terpene resins. A list of plasticizers is also given. The specification then gives four ex

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amples showing how to combine various film-formers, tackifiers, plasticizers and solvents to obtain brush-treating compositions of the desired characteristics, and explains how to apply them to brushes.

The Claims

In view of the result we reach, we find that claims 1 and 8 are representative:

1. A two-phase brush treating composition having a high softening point and sufficient tack to retain abrasive material firmly adhered to brush fill material comprising a film-forming resin and a tackifier resin which is incompatible with said film-forming resin, said two phases comprising a continuous phase formed of said film-forming resin and a dispersed phase formed of small particles of tackifier resin.

8. In combination, a rotary brush having brush fill material and a two-phase pressure sensitive adhesive brush treating composition adhered thereto having a high softening point and sufficient tack to retain abrasive material firmly adhered to such brush fill material comprising a film-forming resin and a tackifier resin which is incompatible with said film-forming resin, said two phases comprising a continuous phase formed of said film-forming resin and a dispersed phase formed of small particles of tackifier resin.

The remaining claims on appeal are narrower, containing recitations of specific resins, plasticizers, etc.

The Prior Art

Grantham ¹ relates to coatings for film material and discloses a coating composition comprising a cellulose derivative film-former, a blending resin, a plasticizer, and an organic solvent. Grantham teaches that the blending agent and the film-former should be compatible.

Depew ² teaches the preparation of emulsions consisting of a continuous phase of water and a discontinuous phase of elastomer particles and particles of a volatile hydrocarbon, with vulcanizing ingredients and other additives dispersed in the hydrocarbon particles. Depew then states that where a dispersion with additional adhesive properties is desired, an adhesive, such as certain of the tackifier resins disclosed by appellants, can be added to the emulsion, and that

[t]his adhesive can be water soluble or dispersed as particles. * * * The chemistry

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of the adhesive component is not critical to this invention. The important thing is that the deposited film shall be tacky and adhesive.

Sergi ³ relates to adhesives suitable for installation of floor-covering products such as linoleum. Sergi's composition consists of a tackifier resin dispersed in a latex binder; the tackifier and latex must be compatible with one another, according to the Sergi disclosure.

Vaughan ⁴ teaches impregnating a fibrous buffing wheel with an aqueous emulsion consisting of a tacky resin and an emulsifier or stabilizer such as glue or gum.

The Board

The board found the composition claims to be unpatentable over Depew, Sergi or Grantham under 35 U.S.C. 103. The board reached this conclusion after noting that each of the three references shows some of the film-formers, tackifiers, plasticizers and solvents appearing in appellant's lists. The board found that the recited limitation of incompatibility was too relative a term to distinguish over the compositions of the references.

The board found that the claims to the treated brush were unpatentable, under 35 U.S.C. 103, over Vaughan in view of Sergi or Depew. Since Vaughan shows treating brushes, the board apparently considered it obvious to treat brushes with compositions which it thought were made obvious by Sergi or Depew.

The board also affirmed the rejection of certain claims for being "broader than the disclosure" under 35 U.S.C. 112. The board's basis for this rejection was that the specification did not provide adequate guidelines for making a selection among the various disclosed ingredients, nor among other materials which are not disclosed but would be included by the claims.

Opinion

We first treat the rejection under section 112. This rejection is in effect an attack on the specification as being insufficient to teach how to practice the broad invention claimed. The rejection is therefore under the first paragraph of section 112. The board's position, as mentioned above, was that the specification did not teach how to select ingredients so that the desired incompatibility would result. We disagree with the board's position on this point. First of all, appellant provided four examples, each specifying the nature and amounts of materials to be used. Secondly,

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the record indicates that it involves only routine experimentation to find out which resins are incompatible. The examiner admitted as much when, with regard to obviousness, he said "selecting the proper tackifier and film-forming resin from those listed in the references to form an emulsion or two-phase composition would be within the expected skill of the art and would merely involve routine experimentation." We conclude that appellant has provided a sufficient specification to support the claims here in issue.

[1] Turning to the rejection of the claims for obviousness, we again disagree with the board's position. The board has disregarded the term "incompatible," as used in the claims, because it is "too relative" to distinguish over the compositions of the references. Appellant contends this limitation is essential in defining his invention. There has been

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no rejection here for indefiniteness, under the second paragraph of section 112. Rather than reject the claims as indefinite, the board chose to ignore the language it considered indefinite, and proceeded as though that language were not in the claims. The board said, in effect, that since we do not know what "incompatible" means, and the rest of the claim defines obvious subject matter, there is no basis for concluding unobviousness. This reasoning is incorrect. All words in a claim must be considered in judging the patentability of that claim against the prior art. If no reasonably definite meaning can be ascribed to certain terms in the claim, the subject matter does not become obvious-the claim becomes indefinite. In the present case, we think the term "incompatible" is defined with reasonable definiteness in the specification. While it is true that the word is not perfectly precise, under the circumstances of the present case there appears to be no other way for appellant to describe his discovery. In any event, the ignoring of this term by the board renders its conclusion of obviousness unsupported. None of the references discloses a two-phase composition of incompatible resins or suggests that such a composition would have the properties disclosed by appellant. Grantham and Sergi both expressly teach that the components of their compositions should be compatible. Neither Vaughan nor Depew uses a resin as the continuous phase. While Depew states, as quoted above, that the adhesive material may be dispersed as particles in the continuous phase, and hence be incompatible with the continuous phase material, it cannot be ignored that Depew's continuous phase is of water, not a film-forming resin as recited in appellant's claims. Furthermore, there is no suggestion in Depew or Vaughan that there are advantages in using an adhesive which is insoluble in the aqueous phase. There is nothing of record, therefore, from which we can properly conclude that the subject matter of appellant's claims would have been obvious at the time of his invention. The decision of the board must accordingly be *reversed*.

Footnotes

Footnote 1. U. S. Pat. 3,051,670, issued August 28, 1962.

Footnote 2. U. S. Pat. 2,933,469, issued April 19, 1960.

Footnote 3. U. S. Pat. 3,015,638, issued January 2, 1962.

Footnote 4. U. S. Pat. 2,890,136, issued June 9, 1959.

- End of Case -